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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the curriculum development process involved in the production of a set of peace education materials developed by the churches in Ireland during the past 13 years. Peace education is concerned primarily with a positive approach to peacemaking and the development of people who internalize a positive vision of peace, have a real sense of justice, personal and social, and who are sensitized and helped to cope with the various social manifestations of violence and conflict in their own lives and the wider world. The document examines the educational rationale of this project in the context of the two educational systems operating in Ireland. The process by which the materials are produced fall under six headings: (1) teacher workshops; (2) writing phase; (3) piloting phase; (4) editing and rewriting; (5) dissemination; and (6) evaluation. The document outlines some of the issues facing the development of peace education in Ireland in the next decade. Some of these are learning from past experiences, avoiding raising expectations that are not fulfilled, appreciating the difficulties of implementation of curriculum innovation in a climate of financial cutbacks, understanding past inconsistencies in policy in this area, giving adequate resources to agencies that are supportive to schools, and appreciating the greater emphasis in society on competitiveness and a strong utilitarian thrust. One important issue for future development is an understanding that much of the theory of peace, for example in areas of conflict resolution and human rights education and nonviolence, has yet to be translated into concrete programs for school use. (DK)

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EDUCATION FOR PEACE IN THE CLASSROOM – CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS: A CASE STUDY FROM IRELAND

Paul Rogers

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This paper describes the curriculum development process involved in the production of a set of peace education materials developed by the churches in Ireland during the past 13 years. It examines the educational rationale of this project in the context of the two educational systems operating in Ireland and outlines some of the issues facing the development of peace education in Ireland in the next decade.

EDUCATION FOR PEACE IN THE CLASSROOM – CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS: A CASE STUDY FROM IRELAND

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"Would that today you know the things that make for peace." (Lk. 19:42.)

Throughout history concerned people have been interested in knowing the "things that make for peace" and passing this knowledge on to others. In our day we call this education for peace and in addition to "knowing", we have added terms such as understanding, skills, feelings, emotions and values which all combine to form a multi-dimensional educational "process" concerned with the life-enhancing development of individuals, communities, nations and the world. It is primarily concerned with a positive approach to peacemaking and the development of people who internalise a positive vision of peace, have a real sense of justice, personal and social, and who are sensitised and helped to cope with the various social manifestations of violence and conflict in their own lives and the wider world.

This paper will attempt to describe the curriculum development process involved in the production of a set of peace education materials developed by the churches in Ireland during the past 13 years. It will examine the educational rationale of this project in the context of the two educational systems operating in Ireland and outline some of the issues facing the development of peace education in Ireland in the next decade.

The outbreak of violent civil conflict in Northern Ireland in 1969 led some people to think about the possible long-term role of peace education in such a situation. In 1974 the *Irish Commission for Justice and Peace (ICJP)*, a Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, began producing prototype peace education materials for schools. In 1979 the Commission joined with the *Irish Council of Churches (ICC)*, a Council representing eight Protestant denominations in Ireland, in an informal relationship to establish a *Joint Peace Education Programme (JPEP)*. The

success of this initial informal co-operation led to the decision by the two bodies to organise the *JPEP* on more formal basis in order to produce peace education curriculum materials for schools and promote peace education with youth, parent and other adult groups.

The *Joint Peace Education Programme (JPEP)* operated by these two bodies is unusual, if not unique, in being an integrated educational project involving the main churches in Ireland and organised across two political jurisdictions. (1) Naturally much of the work of the *JPEP* reflects the existence of deep-rooted conflicts in Northern Ireland. However, even if these conflicts did not exist the promotion of peace education in Ireland would still be necessary since, in addition to local concerns, it is concerned with justice and peace issues at the interpersonal and broader national and international levels.

The history of church relationships in Ireland has, unfortunately, been characterised by division and mistrust. It is worth noting that while there are still fundamental differences on dogma and doctrine between the churches, the daily operation of the *JPEP* is one example of inter-church co-operation which bears witness to important concepts of peace such as dialogue, active listening, compromise, consensus decision-making, and unity. While the development of the *JPEP* has not been without difficulties, the very process of working through conflicts and differences, and engaging in this experimental ecumenical and educational project, entails a step forward for the churches involved and gives a concrete practical expression by the Catholic and Protestant Churches to building peace in Ireland. The *JPEP* is an all-Ireland ecumenical venture operating on a full-time basis and working on curriculum development in peace education for schools and churches.

The Development Process

Like many writers on peace education – e.g. Reardon (1988), Burns and Aspeslagh (1983), Hicks (1988), Rogers (1986), Bjerstedt (1986), and Harris (1988) – the *JPEP* understanding of peace education is that it should be cross-curricular and permeate a number of areas of school study such as Religious Education (RE), English, Social Studies, Civics, Lifeskills etc. In fact, *JPEP* materials are often used as part of pastoral care or counselling programmes. The process by which all of the *JPEP* materials are produced can be described under the following headings:

(1) Teacher workshops; (2) Writing phase; (3) Piloting phase; (4) Editing and rewriting; (5) Dissemination; (6) Evaluation.

(1) Teacher workshops

It is now a commonly accepted curriculum development ground-rule that "there can be no curriculum development without teacher development" (Stenhouse, 1975) and consequently the *JPEP* enlists the support of teachers at every stage in the development of materials.

During an annual Summer School Workshop teachers from North and South, Catholic and Protestant, come together to work on the content of materials, the themes of which have been assigned by the project team. These are intensive week-long residential workshops, the most recent of which have produced draft outlines for the new *Sedekah Peace Programme* of post-primary peace education modules.

Teachers benefit greatly from these workshops and as a consequence many become involved in teaching the pilot version of materials and, ultimately, in the classroom evaluation of the final published versions.

(2) Writing phase

Following the initial workshop phase the materials are then developed by the staff members of the Programme. (2) Writers must be consistently aware that the materials are intended for students in all parts of Ireland and consequently there is a constant review of terminology and content to take account of this.The same vigilance is necessary to ensure that the materials will be acceptable in both Catholic and Protestant schools. Writers therefore have to take account of the political, religious, educational and social differences in Ireland – a task on one hand requiring immense sensitivity and on the other a determination to provide good quality teaching programmes which are relevant, challenging and acceptable to busy teachers.

Since the 1960's there has been a steadily developing literature supporting an increased concentration on the "affective" dimension of the curriculum. Morgan's (1989) research in this area found that despite grandiose statements about the affective and non-cognitive areas in the statements of general aims of the curriculum, the actual attention given in curricular materials to the affective area in the specification of objectives was much less, and less again in classroom practice. Hopefully this observation does not apply to any significant extent to the *JPEP* materials whose writers (particularly in the new post-primary programme) have

been concerned to include specific content and appropriate methodologies to take account of the affective; feelings, attitudes, opinions and values are thus given a high priority.

(3) Piloting phase

The next phase in the development process is to pilot the materials in schools. It is interesting to note that this phase has stimulated interest among so many teachers, some of whom become extremely eager to be involved and to introduce their students to the world of peace education, perhaps for the first time. Indeed, piloting has engendered teacher interest and commitment well beyond that anticipated by the project team, and is now considered to be an extremely important dimension of the overall development process.

(4) Editing and re-writing

The editing and re-writing of the materials which follows piloting includes on-going consultation with educationalists and other interested individuals and agencies. When this consultation and re-writing process is complete the material is finally published as attractively as possible.

(5) Dissemination

The published version is then disseminated as widely as possible to teachers and schools through the usual channels – direct contact with schools, contact with education advice and support personnel, contributions to pre- and in-service professional development courses for teachers, resources centres and catalogues. (3)

At this point it may be worth noting international interest in the work of the *JPEP*. It has been encouraging to learn from educationalists and teachers in other countries (eg. Germany, Hungary, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Czechoslovakia and Austria) of their interest in translating and/or adapting *JPEP* materials for use in their schools. Such adaptations which would be relevant to schools in continental Europe would possibly include issues such as immigrants, ethnic problems, European security and minority groups. This interest also raises possibilities for joint work based on *JPEP* materials between teachers and students from various countries, both inside and outside the European Community. With the enormous changes in the world in the past decade new forms of co-operation across frontiers in the area of peace education becomes a challenging and exciting possibility.

(6) Evaluation

The *JPEP* team is conscious of the need for evaluating its materials and has addressed this by consulting educational evaluators and teachers throughout the production and dissemination process. It constantly struggles with the pragmatic need to produce and disseminate good quality classroom materials which will generate and sustain interest in peace education and the need for relevant and on-going evaluation. So far the *JPEP* has mainly relied on illuminative feedback from teachers using its materials. However, as materials continue to be developed, the question of evaluation is being addressed more seriously and the strategy of "curriculum action research" (e.g. McKernan, 1991), a field of evaluation "coming of age", may prove to be an appropriate evaluation strategy for this task.

The JPEP Materials

Primary

The first set of materials from the *JPEP* were published in 1983 for Primary/Junior school pupils in the 8-12 age group.

This Programme, entitled *Free to Be*, focuses on the promotion of self-worth and self-awareness, awareness of people of other races and faiths, the use of words and symbols, the environment and people of peace. These materials comprise teacher guides and pupil booklets on each of the topics mentioned.

Upper primary/lower secondary

In 1984 *Looking at Churches and Worship in Ireland* was published. Originally intended as the final unit of *Free To Be* this programme developed into a teaching package for the 10-13 age group. It aims to develop a deeper understanding of the various Christian traditions in Ireland and is the only set of *JPEP* materials dealing specifically with a church topic. It was intended that this pack would be taught in R.E. or as part of a cross-curricular programme involving English, R.E. or Local Studies. The publication *Looking at Churches and Worship in Ireland* has been particularly popular with schools in Northern Ireland and has been partly responsible for a decision to produce a series of educational videos on four Christian denominations in Ireland. (4)

Post-primary

On the completion of the *Free to Be* and *Looking at Churches and Worship in Ireland* Programmes it was decided to develop a complete peace education programme for Irish post-primary schools, North and South. This programme, entitled the *Sedekah Peace Programme* (5), is a series of modules for 11-18 year olds. The first of these modules entitled *Peacemaker* was published in 1988 and the second entitled *Power to Hurt – Exploring Violence* has just been published. (6) The format of both of these modules is teacher-orientated lesson plans in a series of units with photocopyable worksheets for pupils. It was decided to develop the post-primary *Sedekah Peace Programme* as a sequence of free-standing yet interdependent modules on various topics since there was an increased possibility of introducing peace education to the curriculum with this type of design format which allows the modules to be easily used in various curriculum areas. The methodologies used include writing, listening, talking, drama, role-play, debating, group work, research, project work, surveys, interviewing and reporting. It is envisaged that future modules in the *Sedekah Programme* on the themes of family, nonviolence, human rights, power and powerlessness and conflict resolution will be based on the same curriculum design format i.e. teacher-orientated lesson plans in a series of units with photocopyable student worksheets.

Adult study guides

In addition to these school materials the *JPEP* has produced a set of Adult Biblical Study Guides on the themes of peace, violence, justice, reconciliation and poverty. A further Guide on the environment is expected to be published soon.

Educational Rationale

At this point it might be useful to place the work of the *JPEP* within the context of the two educational systems operating in Ireland and in this context refer to aspects of the educational rationale involved.

The Northern Ireland system

There is no doubt that Northern Ireland is a deeply divided and very violent society. Violence has left a death toll in the past 22 years of almost

3,000 – a figure which when translated for example into Great Britain terms is the equivalent of 90,000.

The Northern Ireland school system, reflective of the community which it serves, is divided almost equally into two sectors, one serving the Catholic/Nationalist community and known as the "maintained sector", the other serving the Protestant/Unionist community and known as the "controlled sector". (7) A third "Integrated Schools" sector which has been developing in the past decade accounts for less than 2% of Northern Ireland schools. Like other societies experiencing similar upheaval, the educational system becomes subject to criticism and to demands for reform and, understandably for most of the past 20 years, there have been attempts to use the school system to help the children of both communities in Northern Ireland to come together to improve community relations. It is not surprising, therefore, that during this time attention has focused on ways in which schools might address what Skilbeck (1973) calls a "sectarian culture."

Addressing the problem

There is little significant research on the effectiveness of programmes such as the *JPEP* in helping to solve the problems of a divided society like Northern Ireland. However, our experience is that there is a great willingness on the part of teachers and schools to attempt to break down barriers and turn the tide of violence which is still so much a part of life in Northern Ireland. Combined with this willingness is the speculation or "hunch" of many concerned teachers that involvement in peace education and community relations projects will help young people to find solutions to the violent divisions of the society in which they live. It is heartening in this instance to see experimental curriculum practice preceding curriculum theory, a phenomenon characteristic of many of the curriculum development projects in the 1960s and 70s. Many commentators including Crone and Malone (1972, p.2) and Daly (1979), agree that the problems of Northern Ireland have more to do with the politics of dominant and subordinate communities than with separate school systems. Wright (1991) supports a similar view and adds an additional interesting observation which contends that in divided societies "separated systems of education have often been a way of making distrust between national communities manageable." (P.5.)

While it would be foolish to "blame" the separated schools system for the divisions in Ireland, many see a role for schools as agents for

reconciliation. Attempts by schools to address the problems of Northern Ireland can be loosely categorised into three strategies:

1. Curriculum change efforts. (8)
2. Contact of schoolchildren from both sides of the community.
3. Integrated schools.

Reconstructionism

These three strategies to involve schools in bridging divisions in Northern Ireland are based on what has been termed a "reconstructionist" view of education developed in Northern Ireland by Skilbeck (1973) and, in part, taken originally from the writings of John Dewey. Reconstructionism supports the view that schools can be agents of social change. Dunn (1986) summarises this theory by saying: "Since schools pass on the culture, they can change the nature of the culture by changing their practice" (p. 234). By promoting this view schools should be able to help to create mutual understanding and tolerance among the opposing communities of a divided society. While there is a view of education at the other end of the spectrum which argues that schools preserve and strengthen the consensual culture and prepare children to live comfortably in and with that culture, the *JPEP* has adopted a reconstructionist position. Where the *JPEP* is unique is that it addresses these problems through classroom curriculum development work and, while it encourages joint contact between the two communities based on this work, it does not depend on this "contact" strategy alone to achieve its aims. Rather, it combines the two strategies of direct curriculum change efforts with joint contact work. In the case of *JPEP* materials being taught in an integrated school, all three curriculum strategies would be operational. Teachers seem to appreciate this approach in that they are more willing to be involved in contact with a school from the "other side" if this contact is centred on a specific and well-planned teaching programme.

Reconstructionism, it would seem, is the policy of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) which emphasises the role of everyone involved in the educational system in the task of "fostering improved relationships between the two communities in Northern Ireland" (DENI, 1982). This policy has been expanded and developed by DENI with support for numerous initiatives in each of the three areas already mentioned and has become government policy under the title of *"Education for Mutual Understanding" (EMU)*, a title recently incorporated as a one of six Cross-Curricular Themes in the new Northern

Ireland Education Reform Order of 1989. (9) Schools in Northern Ireland now have a statutory obligation to have *EMU* as part of their curriculum, thus offering the *JPEP* a more open and positive educational environment for the promotion of peace education.

The Republic of Ireland Context

In the Republic of Ireland the *JPEP* is the only curriculum development programme explicitly using the title of peace education although several other projects, similar in methodology and value-orientation, have developed in the last decade in cognate areas such as development education, lifeskills, civics and education for life.

In the past decade the Southern Education system has been involved in a programme of major curriculum reform which has resulted in a new review of the primary curriculum introduced in 1971 (10), a new Junior Certificate programme for 12-15 year olds and a review of the Senior Cycle curriculum for the 15-18 age group (11). The present primary curriculum already provides many opportunities for the inclusion of peace education particularly in areas like Religious Education, English and Social and Environmental Studies. At this level, Hand (1990) has positively evaluated a development/peace education programme entitled *"So Everybody Fights"?* (Sheehy, 1988). (12) This programme deals with major issues including security, respect for others and the environment, conflict resolution, peace and war, racial and ethnic prejudice and global interdependence. In the post-primary sector there have been a range of curriculum innovations developed in the last decade and described by McNamara et al. (1990) of which "education for living" and "curriculum concern for the transition to adulthood and working life" have a particular relevance for peace education as have the post-primary curriculum areas of English, History, Geography, Environmental and Social Studies, Business Studies, Home Economics and Civic Education. The new curriculum philosophies embodied in these areas and in the general reform are providing significant opportunities for the development of peace education as a cross-curricular element. This opportunity might best be maximised by materials in a modular form.

In the broader educational context it is heartening that curriculum theorists like McKernan (1990) are now specifically and unreservedly asking for the Southern education system to "engage in systematic

curriculum development to provide Peace Education and Education for Mutual Understanding." (P. 23.)

Peace Education Issues for the 1990's

Coolahan (1990) has outlined the main issues facing curriculum development projects in the Republic of Ireland, many of which are relevant to peace education in the broad field. He suggests care should be taken to:

- learn from past experiences if we are to structure for success in the nineties;
- avoid raising expectations which are not fulfilled thus creating disappointment and disillusionment (an observation made also by MacDonald and Walker (1976) when referring to the many curriculum development projects in Britain in the 1960's and 1970's);
- appreciate the difficulties of "on-the-ground" implementation of curriculum innovation in a climate of financial cut-backs in education;
- understand past inconsistencies in policy in this area and not underestimate the importance of adequate planning to implement proposed curriculum change. In the past there has been a tendency to give more attention and resources to drafting new curriculum programmes than there has been to ensure effective classroom implementation;
- give adequate resources to agencies which are supportive to schools;
- appreciate the greater emphasis in society on competitiveness and a strong utilitarian thrust.

The experience of the *JPEP* since its establishment in 1979 is that peace education is in the early stages of development and it is therefore more important to produce premium quality resource material which will have maximum uptake by busy teachers than take the faster route of appealing to schools and teachers with noble aspirations and mediocre resources. When working on a new development which is not part of mainstream curriculum thinking it is sometimes difficult to get the correct balance between materials production, teacher involvement and widespread dissemination and evaluation and while the *JPEP* would not claim to have got this balance completely correct, there are extremely encouraging signs (especially with the substantial uptake of materials by teachers) that the

process to date has been reasonably successful. The fact that churches are involved in this process adds a further dimension to the co-operation involved in such a curriculum development exercise. A further important issue for future development is an understanding that much of the theory of peace, for example in areas of conflict resolution and human rights education and nonviolence has yet to be translated into concrete programmes for school use. There is therefore the need to continue with patient development of materials in these areas.

Let us hope that peace education will continue to develop into an important and dynamic life-enhancing component of the learning experience of every child so that, in the not too distant future, churches and other educationalists in Ireland will be able to confidently claim:*"We might not know all the things that make for peace, but we do know a lot about peace education."*

Note: An extended version of this text was presented at a conference on Peace Education organised by the Irish Peace Institute and the Educational Studies Association of Ireland at the University of Limerick in October 1991. The full text of the conference papers will be available from: Irish Peace Institute, University of Limerick, Ireland.

Notes

1. Ireland was partitioned in 1921 with 26 counties becoming the Republic of Ireland and 6 north eastern counties becoming Northern Ireland and remaining under British control. This partition has therefore created two political jurisdictions, two Governments and two educational systems.

2. There are two full-time peace education officers based in Belfast and one in Dublin. The three officers were former teachers in primary and post-primary schools.

3. Catalogues of resource materials for peace education are obtainable free of charge from the resources centres of the JPEP, 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9 6AZ, Tel: 662992; and 169 Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin, Tel: 2883866.

4. Each video in this series deals with membership of one of four Christian denominations in Ireland – Catholic, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist. Further information is available from Veritas, Lower Avenue, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CU31 3NP, England; Peace Education Resources Centre, 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9 6AZ; and Veritas, 7-8 Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

5. *"Sedekah"* (pronounced "seh-daa-ka") is sometimes translated into English as "righteousness" and sometimes as "justice", but has a meaning in the original Hebrew to which neither of these English-language equivalents is adequate. A succinct definition might be *"God's power to put things right in human community and in nature."* The concept embraces both God's initiative and our response.

6. *Peacemaker* is a module of eight units for the 12-15 age group dealing with the knowledge, values and skills associated with positive self-image, understanding and coping with diversity, building interpersonal and intergroup relationships and the moral and spiritual orientation of peacemaking.

   Power to Hurt – Exploring Violence is the second module of the *Sedekah Series* for the 13-15 age group. The overall aim of this module is to encourage students to investigate the complex theme of violence at various levels in their lives, in order to develop informed and responsible moral decision-making skills in this area and a greater awareness of alternatives to violence.

   A study of violence in peace education can often be criticised on grounds of it having a negative and depressing effect on children. Galtung (1990 p. 292), promoting a similar view to the *JPEP*, argues for the inclusion of a study of violence in much the same way as pathology (the study of disease) is an important component of health education. An indication of the high level of teachers' involvement in the development of both of these modules is reflected in the numbers of schools throughout Ireland involved in piloting – 27 for Peacemaker and 41 for Power to Hurt – Exploring Violence.

   Both modules include teacher notes on methodology and suggestions on multi-media classroom resources and are available from the offices of the *JPEP* (see note 3).

7. In describing the two communities in Northern Ireland as Catholic/Nationalist and Protestant/Unionist it must be explained that these are terms of convenience for writing purposes. While the majority of Catholics would have Irish nationalist aspirations and the majority of Protestants would aspire to a continued union with Great Britain, there are varying degrees of difference in both sets of aspirations

which are not reflected in these simplified terms.

8. One of the first projects to attempt direct curriculum change as a strategy to aid reconciliation was John Malone's *"Schools Curriculum Project"* (1973-1978) based at Queen's University, Belfast.This project produced unpublished curriculum materials and was the forerunner to other curriculum resource-producing projects like the *"Religion In Ireland Project"* (1974-1985) based at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, the *"Schools Cultural Studies Project"* (1974-1981) also at UUC and the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace and Irish Council of Churches, *"Joint Peace Education Programme"* (1978 to present). Materials from these projects have made their way into most schools in Northern Ireland with varying degrees of uptake.

9. The 1989 Northern Ireland Education Reform order specifies a new core curriculum for all schools comprising six areas of study – English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Environment and Society, Creative and Expressive Studies and Language studies. Each area of study has also to deliver six cross-curricular themes, two of which are Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage.

10. See "The Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum" published by the National Council for Curriculum Assessment, Dublin, in May 1990.

11. See "Senior Cycle: Issues and Structure, A Consultative Paper" published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Dublin, in May 1990.

12. *"So Everybody Fights?"* is a development/peace education programme for 9-13 year olds published by the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, Dublin. It provides excellent background information for teachers on the subject being discussed, includes methodology notes for the teacher and games, exercises and worksheets for pupils. This package provides great opportunities for cross-curricular work in Civics, Geography, English, Environmental Studies, Art, RE, Maths, Drama and History. It also provides exceptional opportunities for English language development work and for developing skills in decision-making, analysis and self-expression.

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